

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:**

Kindly replace paragraph [0049] with the following amended paragraph:

[0049] Another aspect of the invention involves a diverter blade which minimizes impact upon the packages. Such a diverter blade 80 is depicted in Figure 8. The blade 80 is shaped similarly to the blade 40 of Figure 3, except that the pusher section 82 is pivotably mounted to the connector section 84 or 85. Furthermore, a shock absorbing mechanism 86 interconnects the pusher section 82 and the connector section 84. The shock absorbing mechanism 86 could, for example, comprises a coil compression spring 88 in which is disposed a motion damper, such as a cylinder 90 having a self-contained supply of flowable medium in which a piston is disposed. The cylinder 90 could be connected to the connector section 84, whereas the piston would be connected to a rod 92 which would be connected to an arm 100 that is integral with the pusher section. Thus, when the pusher section abuts a package during the blade's extension stroke, the pusher section will be rearwardly pivoted about the pivot 85 against the action of the spring 88 to absorb energy that would otherwise be imparted to the package. After the package has been diverted, the spring 88 will return the pusher section to its original state, under the control of the damper 86. Thus, possible damage to the package can be minimized. The arm 100 possesses a number of holes 102 to which the damper can be connected, thereby varying the influence of the shock absorber on the pusher portion.